



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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G.M. 214  
APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CONTROL

Statement for  
Senate Committee on  
Planning and Environment  
Public Hearing - April 6, 1988

by  
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The following testimony by the Environmental Center does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The importance of the quality of the environment of the State and the need for maintenance of optimum environmental quality are cited in the State Constitution and in the Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Director of the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) is one of the leading agents of the environmental management system established for the State by the Legislature. As described in HRS Chapters 341 and 343, OEQC has ministerial, discretionary, and coordinating functions in the implementation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) process and in the oversight of environmental matters within the State. The ministerial functions provide the basis for discretionary decisions through the comprehensive assembling of documents and information within the context of applicable statutory and regulatory frameworks. Because of the influence of the ministerial processes on decision making, the staff of OEQC needs to embody a broad range of environmental competence and experience.

As the Governor's appointed representative, the Director has discretionary authority regarding the acceptability of environmental documents prepared pursuant to chapter 343 for projects involving State lands or State funds and for projects proposed by State agencies. Within this role, the Director's duties are fairly specific, and the competence of his decisions is a reflection of his staff's competence and of his own grasp of environmental statutes and regulations.

The Director of OEQC is also responsible for coordination of all State agencies in matters concerning environmental quality. In this function, the Director must establish a close working relationship with leading

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agency officials, providing leadership and informed advice directed toward bridging interagency complexities in permit processes and resolution of questions of priority. In fulfilling this role, the Director safeguards the interests of both the environment and those who promote the orderly development of economic and social initiatives within the State. As the complexity of our society increases, greater attention to interagency coordination will be required to avoid excessive costs to environmental managers and developers alike.

Another aspect of this role is the establishment of a close working relationship with members of the Legislature, particularly committee Chairs, in consideration of matters relevant to environmental quality. Throughout the legislative process, the Director contributes the resources of his office and of other elements of the State's environmental management system toward resolution of questions of environmental significance raised by proposed legislation.

The importance of the functions of the Director of OEQC in attaining State goals in the realm of environmental quality is evident in the scope of responsibilities outlined in part in the foregoing discussion. While the Environmental Center has not had extensive interactions with Dr. Miura during the transitional interim, we anticipate a close and productive working relationship in the future.

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